



August 23, 1999

SHARPE JAMES
MAYOR
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY
07102

The Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Cuomo:

Over 60 percent of the 1,000 tenants at Garden Spires, a two building, 550 unit complex at 175 and 195 First Street in Newark's Central Ward, receive Section 8 and/or federal rental assistance. I am sure you would agree that this represents a considerable investment by the federal government and most certainly would warrant your concern about the quality of life at Garden Spires.

Recently, this federally-subsidized housing complex has become overrun by drug dealers and drug trafficking. An even more unfortunate aspect of this situation is that many of the Garden Spires tenants are involved in these illegal activities.

However, on a more positive side, new management at the property has pledged to work with the Central Ward councilman and city officials to eradicate the problem at the site. Management has advised the City of its immediate plans to hire more security personnel to monitor those who enter and leave the buildings and to stop open and rampant drug sales and usage. The Newark Police Department will assist in these efforts.

While Garden Spires' new management recognizes the urgent need to address this situation, the increased security will cost thousands of dollars, which are not in its operating budget. Thus, this expense, which we all agree is very much needed to protect and save innocent lives, will produce deficit spending.

Therefore, it is apparent that the only conceivable way to achieve a livable environment at this Central Ward property and alleviate the deficit spending is to seek HUD's assistance in providing an emergency grant dedicated to hiring more security personnel at the complex. This grant could be tied to "quality of life" performance standards and would demonstrate that HUD and the federal government have partnered with the Office of the Mayor and the Newark Municipal Council in a joint effort to eliminate the devastating consequences of rampant drug trafficking at Garden Spires.

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In the future, I also would like to explore with you the problem of granting Section 8 subsidies to those who are not drug free or who hold current criminal records. This examination also would include the difficulty experienced in court trying to remove undesirable tenants.

Again, on behalf of the many decent citizens of Garden Spires who are drug free and do not engage in criminal activities, we need your valued, fiscal assistance at this crucial time. Together, we can win this war against drugs! Together we can improve the quality of life being offered at Garden Spires!

Thank you.

All the best!

Sincerely yours,



Sharpe James

CC: The Hon. Members of the City Council
JoAnne Watson, Business Administrator
Joseph Santiago, Police Director